

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

spend a full week, again without water, food or sleep, facing the intense heat of a fire ceremony invoking Fudōmyōō.

The *dōiri* divides the *kaihōgyō* into two. Someone who has been essentially practicing for his own sake before *dōiri* practices for others afterwards. I have heard it said that being placed between life and death by *dōiri* endows the *gyōja* with special powers. He circles Kyoto in order to bless the city and anyone who comes up to him; the final fire ceremony is fueled with 100,000 sticks with believers' requests to Fudōmyōō written on them.

The *sennichi kaihōgyō* is severe to say the least, making, as it does, Buddhist practice into a literal matter of life and death. In the past 400 years only forty-six have done it. Stevens ends with fascinating biographies of those from the Meiji Period on, and in particular, of the two to have completed the *kaihōgyō* most recently.

If Stevens can be criticized, it is for his use of 'marathon' for *kaihōgyō* and 'spiritual athlete' for *gyōja*. A *gyōja* obviously must be in good shape to daily do for months a course which is much more uphill than a marathon's and is sometimes twice as long. But the *kaihōgyō* is walked, albeit at quite a clip, not run, and a *gyōja* isn't racing or trying to improve his time or doing the *kaihōgyō* for any of the reasons an athlete might have for doing a sport. Of course the *kaihōgyō* isn't a sport, nor does Stevens say it is, yet the subject of the book is listed on its back as being "Sports" first and then "Religion." Someone who has discovered *The Marathon Monks of Mt. Hiei* in the Sports Section of a bookstore may be in for a surprise. On the other hand, this relatively minor imperfection does help Stevens to achieve his apparent—and, to me, praiseworthy—goal of reaching more than only academic and religious audiences. Anyone could enjoy his informative introduction to this unique and significant religious practice.

PETER SCHNEIDER

THE ART OF ZEN: Paintings and Calligraphy By Japanese Monks, 1600–1925. By Stephen Addiss. New York: Abrams, 1989. 224 pp., 114 illus., bibliography, notes, index.

This book, an exhibition catalogue, is intended to be more than a mere guide to a show. Rejecting the staid catalogue format of successive descriptions of discrete works of art, Addiss organizes his book into seven chapters that concentrate on the lives and works of important painters who executed *zenga* (Zen painting). Apart from a brief introductory essay, the chapters pre-

BOOK REVIEW

sent chronological groupings of some twenty-nine artists interwoven with explanations and commentaries on the paintings and translations of their poetic inscriptions. Thus, Addiss attempts to present multi-dimensional portraits of the artists as monks-poets-painters.

It is possible to write two very different reviews of this book depending on whether one treats it as a work for a general or for a scholarly audience. It apparently was intended for a general audience, in which case it is a charming and entertaining book. Addiss writes well and chooses interesting biographical details, many of which were not available before to English readers. Who would not like stories of iconoclastic priests who served drinks to their guests in human skulls or achieved their first religious awakening while sitting in the outhouse? Who has not experienced the wistfulness expressed in a poem like the following: "Here in this village/ there are so many people/ coming and going but when you aren't one of them/ it can be very lonely." Clearly this book is one that the general reader, undergraduate students, and even many specialists will enjoy.

On the other hand, Addiss' skill in presenting the material masks some significant weaknesses in his methodology and definitions. The organization of the book for example, is based on Addiss' contention that the best way to trace *zenga* is through the lives of the major monk-artists (p. 17). The problem with his treatment is that he is not critical enough in dealing with hagiographic accounts, full of anecdote and hyperbole. After all, the sources were compiled chiefly by disciples and followers who wrote to praise and promote the reputation of their teachers. Addiss points out that the monk-artist Nantembo once remarked that "records of Chinese patriarchs exaggerated their virtues and embellished their lives with miraculous legends, but that these stories were harmful rather than helpful to Zen" (p. 186). Addiss himself sometimes falls into a similar trap when, for example, he retells the legend of Bodhidharma without making reference to the critical studies that try to separate fact from fiction such as is found in John McRae's *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1986). This is not to say that the biographies are not entertaining and to some degree useful. After all, what is believed about historical figures is often as important as what is true about them. But the distinction between fact and fiction should still be made so that readers, who can appreciate the value of fiction, will still not mistake it for fact.

The other general problem lies in the definition of *zenga*. Addiss correctly points out that the Japanese use the term in a narrow fashion to refer to paintings and calligraphy by Zen monks from 1600 to the present and that this definition is overly restrictive because it excludes painters who had no sectarian Zen affiliation such as Konoe Nobutada, a courtier; Shōkadō Shōjō and

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

Jiun, Shingon monks; and Gōchō Kankai, a practitioner of the *nembutsu*, son of a Shinshu priest and student of Tendai; all of whom Addiss would include as *zenga* artists. Addiss insists that “*Zenga* is the brushwork of leading Zen monks or occasionally of other monks and laymen who have studied Zen deeply enough to be imbued with its spirit” (p. 206), or that *zenga* is produced by “monks who have transcended individual egos” (p. 6). Thus he chooses the spiritual character of the painter as the chief criteria for defining *zenga*.

At the very least this seems presumptuous and is certainly naive. The belief that there is a direct correlation between spiritual attainments and artistic skills is highly questionable. It is, of course, extremely difficult to judge a person's spiritual attainments, especially if the literary evidence is mostly laudatory. Addiss' expansion of the meaning of *zenga* to include works by those not affiliated with Zen sects is an important point, but it also means that by the seventeenth century the construct we call *zenga* refers most clearly to a particular style of painting and certain themes. It is one style among many, often chosen by monk-artists, but not used exclusively by them, and was even practiced by those for whom there is no solid evidence of authentic spiritual achievements.

My objections to the definition of the topic and the lack of a more critical viewpoint may be regarded by some as pedantic. Certainly Addiss is not alone in presenting a romantic view of Zen and the arts and artists related to Zen. Indeed it is this idealistic view that has fascinated westerners for a long time. The book jacket includes quotations by such famous men (and ideal general readers) as John Cage and Robert Motherwell who praise Addiss' clarity, wit and concreteness. I would not disagree with them. Certainly the book is both beautiful and informative, but it broadens our knowledge without sharpening our critical understanding.

WILLA JANE TANABE

DOGEN, LA NATURALEZA DE BUDA (SHOBOGENZO), Introducción del Dr. Abe Masao. Translated and edited by Félix E. Prieto (Barcelona: Ediciones Obelisco, 1989) 178 pp.

The translation of Dōgen's major work and studies on Dōgen into Spanish is long overdue, and the Spanish painter and aficionado of Buddhism, Félix Prieto, is to be congratulated for breaking new ground. The present book contains a translation of Abe Masao's important essay, “Dōgen on Buddha-Nature,” and of the “Buddha-Nature” chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* from the amply annotated Waddell-Abe translation originally published in the pages of